

Dies Irae

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/1133202) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/1133202>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warnings:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence , Rape/Non-Con
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham , Hannibal Lecter , Alana Bloom , Jack Crawford , Beverly Katz
Additional Tags:	Canon-Typical Violence and Cannibalism , Mutilation , Aftermath of Torture , Amputation , Abduction , Manipulation , Stockholm Syndrome , Mental Health Issues , Body Horror , Body Worship , Amputation Kink , Gore , Forced Autophagia , Non-Consensual Drug Use , Non-Consensual Body Modification , Mind Control , Alternate Universe - Boxing Helena , Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence , Inability to Consent , Captor Bonding , Ableism , Codependency
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of The Goldberg Variations
Stats:	Published: 2014-01-13 Completed: 2014-01-21 Words: 2,033 Chapters: 2/2

Dies Irae

by [thisisthefamilybusiness](#)

Summary

When the police find him on Wednesday, Will is lying unconscious from dehydration and starvation in the big master bed. The officer to find him is a new female recruit. She screams, assuming he is dead and she just stumbled upon on the last known victim of Hannibal the Cannibal.

Later, thinking back on it, Will can't blame her.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

- Translation into 中文-普通话 國語 available: [Dies Irae 末日經](#) by [jls20011425](#)

Gnossienne 1: Lent

Hannibal leaves for work on a Monday morning and does not return at six-thirty as was routine.

Will refuses to panic or to even think what about what it might mean, and instead closes his eyes and hums Bach to himself. Maybe there had been an appointment that had run overtime. Maybe he was caught in traffic.

Eight o'clock comes and goes.

Maybe Hannibal had been called in by Jack to help with a case.

Nine o'clock comes and goes.

Will is hungry. He stares at the door to the hallway beyond the bedroom longingly. There was a time when he might have wished for the ability to just roll out of bed and walk to the kitchen to make his own food, but in truth, all Will wants right now is for Hannibal to walk through the door and carry him down to dinner.

Eleven o'clock comes and goes.

Maybe Hannibal had been in a car accident?

Will falls asleep and dreams of someone playing Tiersen on a piano made of human bones.

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Later, thinking back on it, Will can't blame her.

They call an ambulance once someone finally thinks to check his pulse and they realise he's actually alive.

Later, thinking back on it, Will wishes he had been dead.

It would have been easier.

Will wakes up on Friday in a hospital bed.

His first reaction is to panic, taking a rushed survey of his body to see if Hannibal had taken anything else and if that was why he was wearing a familiar grey-blue hospital gown with an IV drip.

And then he realises that he is in an actual hospital room, in an actual hospital. He is still as whole as he can be, no new scars or empty spaces occupied by the sensations of phantom limbs.

Oh.

Will swallows down hard and forces himself to relax into the stiff hospital pillow.

A nurse comes in and smiles at seeing him awake. Her hands are cold, but they feel good against his suddenly-overheated skin when she brushes her fingertips over his IV port to make sure he hadn't dislodged it in his panic. He fights the urge to lean into her touch.

"Good morning, Mr. Graham."

He grimaces back stiffly. "Hello."

"Do you know where you are?"

A thought crosses his mind, a whisper in Hannibal's voice:

Your name is Will Graham, and you are in Baltimore, Maryland.

Alana is Will's first visitor. Her eyes are rimmed red from tears and her mascara is smeared when she arrives, but she forces a wobbly smile anyway.

"How are you feeling?" Her voice is hoarse, too, and her hands hover awkwardly on the edge of the bed, like she wanted to hold a hand that wasn't there. Her eyes skim over his body, trying to avoid staring or seeming rude, before she settles her gaze on his forehead.

"Good," he lies. He doesn't know how he feels, actually, other than sort of hollow and empty. "As good as can be expected."

Alana looks like she's about to burst into tears again, and Will has to fight a sudden strange urge to roll his eyes. "I, um—" Her voice cracks. "I have your dogs, I'll talk to your doctor about getting you out to go visit them."

"That would be nice." It's another lie. He no longer cares about the dogs; they feel like part of some past life.

"Good, good."

Awkward silence settles between them. Will is tempted to ask after Hannibal, because the room doesn't have a TV and no one in the hospital will answer his questions, but he is afraid of how Alana might react.

"Do you know what you'll do when you get released?" Alana asks hesitantly.

"I'm not going to be released. Not any time in the near future, at least."

It's the truth. Hannibal had made sure that Will was fully dependent on him—he couldn't feed himself, he couldn't get of bed by himself, he couldn't survive on his own. But apparently Hannibal had never accounted for the possibility that one day they might be separated. With a few years of extensive therapy, Will could learn how to function as he was, but he would never be fully independent. He would always need someone to care for him.

“I would be glad to help—”

“No, Alana.”

It comes out more forcefully than he intends, but he can see the way she stares. She's frightened. His scars and missing parts are horrifying to her, like he has been broken from whole.

Some days, when Hannibal had arranged him neatly in bed or on his chair in the dining room or on the bench in the garden, Will used to imagine that this was how it would feel to be a piece of art, constantly formed and shaped to the whims of a sculptor. He was marble and clay that had been carved away, Hannibal had assured him.

To Hannibal, at least, his missing parts had been beautiful.

Alana leaves without another word.

Avec Étonnement

Chapter Summary

It occurred to Will that he shouldn't have been feeling flattered, that he should be repulsed. That Hannibal was a twisted killer who stole from him his autonomy and his body.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"May I sleep next to you?" Hannibal asked, sitting down on the right side edge of the big bed in his ridiculous silk pyjamas.

Always so damned polite, like Will's answer actually mattered to him.

Will nodded and bit down on his tongue to keep from saying anything. Hannibal had been listening contentedly to Tamerlane on the speakers all day, and that always meant good things—massages to alleviate the ache in Will's bones from lying down nearly constantly, warm meals of Will's favourite foods in the dining room, open blinds and curtains in the bedroom to soak in the summer sunlight. He wasn't going to risk that good mood in favour of useless backtalk.

Hannibal smiled in return and slid between the sheets. "May I hold you?"

Bile threatened to rise in the back of Will's throat if he lingered on the idea for too long, but he closed his eyes and nodded again.

Hannibal was warm as he pulled Will into his arms. It was disturbingly familiar and almost... comforting to feel Hannibal curled up at his back, arms around Will's chest to hold him close. Hannibal leaned down to press a gentle kiss to the scar on the stump of Will's left arm before settling back into bed.

Will took a few steady deep breaths and let his body relax into Hannibal's embrace.

For the first time in a long time, Will slept without nightmares.

"You are beautiful, Will. So beautiful."

Will huffed a laugh and pressed the side of his face into the soft, sun-warmed bed sheets, preening until Hannibal's careful attention. It was a good morning, an Arabesque I morning, and Hannibal had been only gentle and softly affectionate so far; in a way that promised safety and no danger.

Hannibal kissed his way down Will's body slowly, from where he'd been tracing Will's jaw with his lips to the scarred end of his right arm.

Will tensed in reflex, sudden anxiety clearing his mind and dissipating the drowsy mood from the mild sedatives that had been hidden in his breakfast. He was used to Hannibal telling him he was beautiful, to studying him like an interesting sculpture, to even some strange perversion of body worship—but this, this physicality was new. Up to now, he'd never paid any particular attention to the ways he'd shaped Will, to his scars and missing pieces. The broken little remains he had left.

Hannibal only kissed the scar and smiled reassuringly. "Relax, Will."

How could he relax? How was he supposed to?

"Will," Hannibal repeated, more forcefully. "You are beautiful."

"I'm broken." His voice sounded harsher than he meant it to.

"No, Will. You are art."

"I'm..." Fading, unstable, lost, broken, a shadow of self-loathing and too much empathy. He'd been broken even before Hannibal had left him with only scars and stumps. "I'm not."

"Marble is a precious material, you know," murmured Hannibal. He turned his head to kiss Will's scar again. "A whole block of marble may be worth thousands of dollars."

Will inhaled sharply and tried to tune out the physical sensations as Hannibal trailed kisses across his bare chest to the stump of his other arm.

"Of course, when you cut and take away from that marble, do you reduce the value?"

It took Will a moment to realise Hannibal expected an answer.

"...Yes?" he said hesitantly.

"So you believe Michelangelo made a mistake in carving the statue of David?" Hannibal laughed softly. "What I take away from you makes no less whole."

It occurred to Will that he shouldn't have been feeling flattered, that he should be repulsed. That Hannibal was a twisted killer who stole from him his autonomy and his body.

That there had once been a time when he'd had to force himself to pretend Hannibal was still his friend and not some sort of monster, when now he had to force himself to remember that under the soft orchestral music and the comparisons to art there was the Chesapeake Ripper and a man who cut off his legs to keep him from running.

The volunteer is young and new—maybe fifteen years old, sixteen at most, dark-haired and dark-eyed. Pretty and innocent, and trying her hardest not to stare at the stumps where Will's

arms and legs had once been, like it made Will more comfortable somehow to have her stare everywhere but at his scars.

Will almost wonders why in hell anyone would assign a volunteer to read to him, but decides to let it go. This girl suits his plans fine enough; she doesn't know anything about him, not even his first name, and he sits through their first two meetings patiently and asks to be read Camus's *The Plague*. It was a book that Hannibal had read to him during his good moods, though Hannibal had been translating on his own from the original French.

It was a book that held only memories of opera on vinyl in the background, Hannibal settling Will in a comfortable nest of blankets in a chair in front of the fireplace to read to him. Admittedly, this girl was a far cry from Hannibal, but it was easy enough to imagine the words in his voice, the smoothness of his accent on the French names instead of her stammering.

"The doctor glanced up at the statue of the Republic, then said that he did not know if he was using the language of reason, but said he knew he was using the language of the facts as everybody could see them—"

"That's enough," Will interrupts.

The girl closes the book, her finger marking the page. "Uh, are you sure? We still have thirty minutes..."

Will smiles at her sheepishly and hopes it doesn't look too faked. "Actually, I was wondering if we could just talk for a while. I don't get many visitors."

The girl sighs in relief. "That's okay. What do you want to talk about?"

"Do you know what happened to Hannibal the Cannibal, that serial killer everyone was talking about a while ago? I used to be a cop, before all this," Will adds hastily. "I was following that case, in the home I was in before, but this hospital wouldn't give me a TV in my room."

"He got ruled insane, I think." The girl narrows her eyes, ever so slightly, like she was still suspicious, despite his explanation. "They put him in the hospital for the criminally insane."

Will struggles to keep his face steady at that, nodding. "Thank you." Hannibal is still alive, then. He isn't sure quite what to do with that knowledge, or how he really feels about it.

The girl is still staring at him suspiciously so Will fakes a smile. "Can I ask you something else?"

"Sure."

"Do you like classical music?"

I said this was only going to be three chapters, but I may have spoken too soon. The plot muse is being very temperamental at the moment.

End Notes

The title means "day of wrath" in Latin, and comes from a line in Mozart's "Requiem" (famous for its "Lacrimosa", which was featured on Hannibal). The chapter titles will come from Erik Satie's "Gnossienne".

There is now a fanmix for this series, which you can listen to [here on 8tracks](#). It features most of the music mentioned, as well as some pieces from my own writing playlist.

There are approximately two more chapters to go in this, and I hope to have it all proofed and posted by the end of next week.

Works inspired by this one

[\[Podfic of\] Dies Irae](#) by [Dr_Fumbles_McStupid](#)

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